

of these women and men to raise children, hold steady jobs, and attend college—and she resolved to help.

And help she did. Upon learning that the Pulaski County Single Parent Scholarship Fund was able to offer only about 10 scholarships per year, and that many deserving single parents were being turned away due to a lack of funds and resources, Bonnie joined the board of directors and committed herself to expanding the program. From 1998 until 2002, Bonnie chaired the fund's board of directors. Under her leadership, the fund began to grow dramatically. In 1998, the fund awarded 16 scholarships worth a total of \$8,000. By 2002, the fund was awarding 98 scholarships worth more than \$63,000. That's an increase of 600 percent in just four years. On top of that, the amount of each scholarship awarded increased by \$150, meaning that every recipient is now enjoying a more generous benefit than ever before. The Single Parent Scholarship Fund has also raised its profile by pursuing corporate and foundation grants and through private fund-raising events.

In addition to increasing the fund's size, Bonnie has spearheaded the effort to provide enhanced support services to scholarship recipients. Among these services are volunteer mentors and loaned computers to help ensure student success. In addition, Bonnie made a point of forging personal relationships with many of the scholarship recipients, meeting with each of them once per semester to encourage them and seek feedback; coordinating the selection process to ensure that scholarships are awarded in a fair, timely, and efficient manner; and continually working to improve service available to recipients.

These efforts are paying real dividends for the fund in terms of success. Since January 1998, an astonishing 94 percent of scholarship recipients have either graduated or are still in school working toward their degrees. Fifty-eight parents have graduated since 1998. That's a tremendous record of success, for which Bonnie and all of the other volunteers with the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund can be justifiably proud.

Bonnie Nickol will retire from the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund this year, and while her leadership will be sorely missed, others who share Bonnie's vision and commitment will most certainly follow. In the meantime, she continues to provide her valuable leadership and volunteer energy for a number of groups in Arkansas, including New Futures for Youth, the Jewish Federation of Arkansas, and the Artspace Artists Cooperative. But of all her contributions, her most impressive may be the work that she's done with the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, work that has made it possible for dozens of single parents in Arkansas to get their degrees and improve their job prospects for the future. I salute Bonnie's efforts, and I

hope that others will look to her as an example of how one person can lend their time, talents, and energy to make a difference in his or her community and in the lives of others.●

TRIBUTE TO FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, on November 25, 2002, Oregonians were reminded once again what the whole nation witnessed on September 11, 2001, that the men and women who run into burning buildings when everyone else is running out, are true heroes.

For it was on November 25, 2002, when Randy Carpenter, Jeffrey Common and Chuck Hanners, all members of the Coos Bay Fire Department, gave their lives while protecting others, when the roof of a warehouse collapsed during a fire.

Randy Carpenter was a thirteen year veteran of the Coos Bay Fire Department. He was a mentor to many young firefighters, and was respected as a man of integrity and professionalism. Along with fighting fires, Randy built houses and taught emergency medical aid classes. He was a loving father to two daughters.

Like his father, Jeffrey Common was a volunteer member of the Coos Bay Fire Department. He worked in the tugboat business and was the devoted father of three young children.

Chuck Hanners was also a volunteer member of the Coos Bay Fire Department. He served as the manager of a retail sporting goods department, but always carried a scanner in his back pocket so he could rush to a fire whenever help was needed. He left behind a wife and six children.

At a very moving memorial service, which was attended by over 7,000 community members and delegations of firefighters from across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, Chuck's 17-year-old son, Daniel, read from the Firefighter's Prayer. The last line of this prayer says, "If according to fate, I am to lose my life, please bless with your hand my children and my wife."

I join with countless other Oregonians in extending my prayers and condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of these three courageous Oregonians. While I was not privileged to know Randy, Jeff, and Chuck, I know of the pride they took in serving as a first responder, and I know that in giving themselves for others, they made themselves special, not just to us, but to God. The Bible tells us that "Greater love than this has no man than to lay down his life for his friends." Because God is love, we know He was there with them when they died, and that He is with them still.

One of America's most beautiful monuments to courage and unselfish service is the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, MD. Flags at this Memorial were flown at half-staff in honor of Randy, Jeff and Chuck. And their names will also be

added to a plaque at the monument, which stands near an eternal flame that represents the spirit of the firefighter, past, present, and future.

The holiday season was a tough one for many in Coos Bay, but I hope that community members can take solace in the fact that they are fortunate to live in a community and we are all fortunate to live in a country that produces individuals like Randy, Jeff, and Chuck, individuals who are willing every day to risk their life so others might be safe. May God Bless the men and women of the Coos Bay Fire Department, and all fire department across the country, and may God Bless America.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Defense Stockpile (NDS) Annual Materials Plan (AMP) to increase the quantities of celestite and quinidine available for disposal; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting, the report entitled Selected Acquisition Reports for the quarter ending September 30, 2002; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the transportation of Chemical Warfare Agent from Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas, to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Program Operations, PWBA, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Class Exemption to Permit Certain Transactions Identified in the Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program" received on November 25, 2002; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report entitled "Department of Defense Annual Implementation Report"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-6. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "U.S.